

The Interactions towards Moral Disengagement, Pro-social Behaviour and Anti-Social Behaviour among Students Athletes

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to observe the interaction of moral resolution on prosocial and antisocial behaviour among university student athletes. The interaction of these two elements may have an impact on athletes' behaviour and performance in sports. The first step in building a successful and harmonious team must be athletic behaviour. This can be seen based on the athlete's age level in the environment of developing athletes. A questionnaire based on the Moral Disengagement Scale (MDSS-S) and Prosocial and Antisocial Behaviour in Sports Scale (PABSS) was completed by 140 athletes of team sports (Futsal, Basketball, Hockey, Handball, Frisbee, Soccer, and Volleyball). The findings show that (i.) there is no correlation between Morale Disengagement towards Prosocial Teammates and Prosocial of the Opposing Team, (ii) Student athletes demonstrated a Morale Disengagement interaction with an antisocial teammate and an antisocial opponent. These findings could help coaches and athletes manage their self-reflection and moral judgement of their actions toward teammates and opponents. Values through sports should promote morale and self-discipline from the athlete's perspective because of the character and competitive behaviour in the sport.

Keywords: *altruism, anti-social behaviour, moral disengagement, prosocial behaviour, self-discipline*

INTRODUCTION

Sport, by definition, is a social setting that offers several possibilities to engage in behaviours that might benefit others. Prosocial behaviour and values are constantly developed in the field of sport, promoting moral and social growth, dedication, involvement, and the transmission of values such as cooperation, tolerance, respect for rules, and self-discipline (Kavussanu & Boardley, 2009). However, due to the competitive nature of the activity and the high pressure to win, sports participation has been linked to negative effects, which can lead to antisocial and unsportsmanlike behaviour. Sometimes the result is aggressive and violent behaviour, an excessive desire to win, and other socially undesirable qualities (Newman et al., 2021).

Sport participation contains a significant moral component. Morality has been regarded as a reliable indicator of antisocial behaviour in a number of research (Shields, Funk, Bredemeier., 2018; Mallia, Lucidi, Zelli, Chirico, Hagger., 2019). The main predictor of antisocial behaviour has been identified as moral disengagement. According to Boardley and Kavussanu (2007), self-reported antisocial behaviour is strongly positively correlated with males' self-reported antisocial behaviour. Given the nature of this research for youth development, it is also critical to identify the predictors. Moral disengagement is a controlled process in which both psychosocial and moral considerations influence a person's actions. Depending on the nature of the behaviour, a person may feel either guilty or proud. These feelings are the result of introspection and moral evaluation of our behaviour.

According to Martí-Vilar, Serrano-Pastor, and Sala (2019), prosocial behaviour is a range of behaviour that have the intention of assisting other individuals or groups. This type of behaviour has been described as voluntary and multi-causal, impacted by a variety of causal and experiential factors as well as the moderating forces and circumstances of socialization impacts (Eisenberg et al. 2006). According to this viewpoint, most research has not been conducted in a sports setting, but rather on youth behaviour. In contrast, this kind of behaviour would be demonstrated in sporting contexts by deeds like congratulating the opposition team after a victory, participating in team tactics, or offering an apology for a poor deed. Thus, prosocial behaviour would promote the development of social ties, safeguarding or moderating maladaptive styles of social interaction, such as aggression, isolation, or social withdrawal (Martí-Vilar et al. 2019).

Acts that breach societal standards and other people's rights are referred to as antisocial behaviour on the other hand. In team sports, Kavussanu (2006) found that behaviours like pushing, cheating, or pretending to be hurt or injured cause harm or injury to others are all done with the intention of suffering repercussions. According to Pellegrin, Serpa, and Rosado (2013), this form of manifestation is influenced by factors including the sport's character (individual or collective), with collective sports exhibiting higher degrees of aggression. The fundamental qualities of each sport also have an impact on the antisocial behaviour that occurs. Antisocial behaviour is therefore more verbal and psychological in activities like table tennis, swimming, and shooting than it is in sports with physical contact, antisocial manifestations are mainly of a physically aggressive nature.

The current study by Shields, Funk and Bredemeier (2018), looked at relationships between moral (moral reasoning maturity, moral value evaluation [MVE], and moral identity), contesting (partnership and war orientations), and behavioural (prosocial and antisocial) variables in sport among US intercollegiate athletes who participated in multiple sports. Results showed that prosocial behaviour was positively connected with moral reasoning maturity, stronger moral value appreciation, moral identity, and a partnership contesting orientation, among other associations. Contrarily, there was a negative correlation between antisocial behaviour and moral reasoning maturity, MVE, moral identity, and relationship orientation. Additionally, there was a strong correlation between antisocial behaviour and a pro-war stance. Regression studies showed that antisocial behaviour was best predicted by the war orientation, closely followed by moral identity, while prosocial behaviour was best predicted by the partnership contending orientation.

Bredemeier and Shields (2019) contend that character development can advance social justice in sporting contexts. According to the research, developing a team culture sensitive to social justice concerns requires rethinking competition and the structure of team interactions. Individual character, which is developed in terms of four categories of character, can evolve within the context of the team's character (moral, civic, intellectual, and performance character). They interestingly proposed that character educators should concentrate on three aspects of moral character: moral reasoning, the circle of moral regard, and moral identity to encourage commitment to social justice. Three principles are developed under civic character: human dignity, full involvement, and accountability. The characteristics of critical thinking, willful ignorance, and giving the weaker groups priority are

discussed in relation to intellectual character and performance character is discussed in relation to an ethic of excellence.

Antisocial behaviours, such as arguing with an opponent, have been shown in studies to be distracting for athletes and teams. Prosocial behaviours, on the other hand, such as supporting a teammate, are beneficial to athletes and teams. However, more research is needed to fully understand the connections between prosocial behaviour, moral disengagement, and antisocial behaviour in team sports. The current study aims to determine how moral disengagement affects both prosocial and antisocial behaviour in young athletes. The relation between these components and both prosocial and antisocial behaviour hypothesized to be demonstrated.

METHODS

Participants

The objective of this quantitative study was to investigate how moral disengagement, pro-social behaviour, and anti-social behaviour among the student's athletes interacted. Thorough observation and solutions aimed at the outcomes and performances of the athletes are necessary for understanding the environment in the coach-athletes management context of behaviour. A total of one hundred and forty (N=140) athletes from team sports (Futsal, Basketball, Hockey, Handball, Frisbee, Soccer and Volleyball) completed a questionnaire based on the Moral Disengagement Scale (MDSS-S), (Boardley & Kavussanu, 2008) and Prosocial and Antisocial Behaviour in Sports Scale (PABSS), (Kavussanu & Boardley, 2009). All the athletes age range from 18 to 24 years (M. 20.63 years; SD. 0.81) with 2 to 7 years of experience in sports and had various of achievement at university, regional and national level.

Measures

Moral Disengagement – The eight items in the Moral Disengagement Sports Scale (MDSS-S), developed by Boardley and Kavussanu (2008) was used to measure youth athletes' perceptions of moral disengagement participated in sports. The athletes were asked to think about the situation of their involvement in sports experience and rate their opinion and confidence for each item on a 7-point Likert Scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Examples of items are such as: "A player should not be blamed for injuring an opponent if the coach reinforces such behaviour" and "insults among players do not really hurt anyone". Cronbach's alpha reported as 0.88.

Prosocial and Antisocial behaviour- This study used the Prosocial and Antisocial Behaviour in Sport Scale (PABSS) developed by (Kavussanu & Boardley, 2009). The PABSS includes 20 items that represent four subscales assessing four types of behaviour: prosocial behaviour toward teammates (4 items E.g., "Gave positive feedback to a teammate"); prosocial behaviour toward opponents (3 items. E.g., "Helped an injured opponent"); antisocial behaviour toward teammates (5 items E.g., "Criticized a teammate"); antisocial behaviour toward opponents (8 items E.g., "Tried to injure an opponent"). Participants were asked to think about their experiences while playing for their team this season and indicate how often they had engaged in each behaviour this season. The items were preceded by "While playing for my team this season, I..." Items were answered using a 5-point Likert scale, anchored by 1 (Never) and 5 (Very often).

Procedures

The study has been approved by the ethical committee at the authors' institution (reference: REC/03/2022 PG/MR/31). Following that, coaches were contacted and informed consent was via email. The researchers explained the instructions, the purpose of the study, and several terms in the questionnaires to the respondents before they completed the questionnaire or the google form. In this sense, the terms moral disengagement and prosocial and antisocial behaviour were clarified to ease

athletes in responding to each question. The respondents were given an informed consent form prior to data collection, informing them that confidentiality and anonymity would be maintained, also the respondents were informed that they could withdraw at any time, and that the information obtained would be kept confidential. A simple and short instruction was written in the google form on how to answer the questionnaire. Respondents were also asked to complete the details in the questionnaire. Respondents were given approximately 30 minutes to complete the questionnaires.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 showed that there was no association between moral disengagement ($M = 3.42$) with prosocial Teammates ($M = 4.36$) and for prosocial Opponent ($M = 4.02$). A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the linear relationship between i. Moral Disengagement and Prosocial Teammate, ii. Moral Disengagement and Prosocial Opponent. Results revealed that there was no correlation between the Moral Disengagement and Prosocial Teammate [$r(138) = .18, p = .114$]; Moral Disengagement and Prosocial Opponent [$r(138) = .38, p = -.075$].

The findings were interpreted as follows: In the context of sport, it is likely that a team of prosocial players will have a beneficial effect, possibly due to prosocial behaviour reinforcement. This is supported by Davies, Babkes Stellino, Nichols, and Coleman (2016), who argue that good coaches play critical roles in athletes' socialization. Furthermore, the controlling coaching style has been linked to antisocial behaviour, whereas the autonomy-supportive coaching style has been linked to prosocial behaviour (Hodge & Gucciardi, 2015). Moral Disengagement is a collection of psychological techniques used by athletes to disengage transgressive actions from themselves and generally hold behaviour in accordance with one's virtues in the feeling of sport. Moral disengagement is the specific utilization of psychological moves that permit an athlete to disregard moral standards without encountering contrary effect (e.g., blame), henceforth lessening the limitation on future unsafe practices. Thus, there was no evidence to strengthen the spirit of prosocial behaviour towards teammates and opponents were weakens or being factored of why athletes should engage with morale issues.

Table 1: Correlation between Moral Disengagement with Prosocial Teammate and Prosocial Opponent

	Variable	M	SD	1	2	3
1	Moral Disengagement	3.59	0.77	<i>0.82</i>		
2	Prosocial Teammate	4.36	0.56	0.182	<i>0.76</i>	
3	Prosocial Opponent	4.02	0.82	0.379	0.389**	<i>0.79</i>

Note. $N = 140$. Alpha coefficients (α) are presented in the diagonal (in italic)

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

However, results revealed a link between moral disengagement and antisocial behaviour (see table 2), for antisocial Teammates ($M=2.94$) and antisocial Opponents ($M=3.22$). The results revealed a positive relationship between Moral Disengagement and Antisocial Teammate [$r(138) = .61, p = 0.01$] and Moral Disengagement and Antisocial Opponent [$r(138) = .56, p = 0.01$]. To explain, moral disengagement in sports works by dehumanizing or accusing the negative casualty, limiting, or clouding one's situation in the harm one causes, ignoring or misconstruing the negative consequences of one's actions, and psychologically rebuilding offensive behaviour. This study adds to a growing body of research that has consistently found strong positive links between moral disengagement and antisocial behaviour, particularly among rivals (Hodge & Gucciardi, 2015).

According to Stanger, Backhouse, Jennings, and Mckenna (2018), the ethical separation mitigates the effect of various influences on antisocial behaviour. Morality can be proactive or inhibitive because one's actions can have positive or negative consequences for others. Inhibitive morality is represented by the ability to refrain from acting inhumanely, whereas proactive morality is represented by the ability to act compassionately (or do good) (or avoiding doing bad things). The findings also show that such characteristics have both negative and positive effects (performance and career threats, affected confidence, pressure and anxiety, and a lack of support) (motivation, resilience and coping skills, opportunities, and learning and awareness).

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics, Alpha Coefficient and Correlations among Variables (Moral Disengagement, Antisocial Teammate and Antisocial Opponent).

	Variable	M	SD	<i>1</i>	2	3
1	Moral Disengagement	3.59	1.39	<i>0.82</i>		
2	Antisocial Teammate	2.94	1.08	0.613**	<i>0.81</i>	
3	Antisocial Opponent	3.22	0.75	0.557**	0.923**	<i>0.78</i>

Note. N = 140. Alpha coefficients (α) are presented in the diagonal (in italic)
 **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

CONCLUSION

According to the findings of this study, athletes' moral values and behaviour are influenced by what they see and experienced through sports. This implies that coaches' behaviours positively correlate with athletes' behaviour and character. Furthermore, we may assume that the athletes' immoral behaviour may be influenced by the behaviour of coaches. Several researchers agreed that coaching style has a significant influence on athletes' prosocial and antisocial behaviour. Athletes' prosocial and antisocial behaviour are influenced by coaching style or approaches (behaviour). As a result, the coach-athlete relationship may have a significant impact on an athlete's moral behaviour in sports. Coaching education should emphasize the importance of creating an autonomy-friendly sports environment for athletes to develop a sense of autonomy, responsibility, and self-control (Chen, Wang, Wang, Ronkainen, & Huang, 2016). The reasons for positivity in coaching behaviour factors, we believe, resulted in prosocial or antisocial athlete behaviour. Additionally, coaching behaviour has a greater impact on student athletes (development phase). When the athlete's training became more difficult, the coach spent more attention especially on the technical wise. The athlete had the impression that he was the connection's focal point and that the coach believed in him. Each sport may have a different perspective on their coach's behaviour based on their experience, gender, personality, or attitude. As a result, if the coach has consistently engaged in successful coaching behaviour, athletes may perceive the coach as more effective (Mohd Kassim, Mohd Aznan, & Abdul Halim, 2020). Thus, the current knowledge of this study gives a better understanding to coaches and athletes in managing the behavior of athletes. Coaches can create an excellent environment full of prosocial behavior while then focusing on better performance without looking down or belittling others.

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AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Ahmad Fikri Mohd Kassim conceived and planned to the study, verify the data and discussion of the results and took the lead in writing the manuscript. Fariha Mohammad Fazilah carried out the literature finding, data preparation and data collection. Wan Mohd Yaseer Mohd Abdoh carried out the data analysis and verified the content writing. Nurul Farha contributed to the interpretation of the results. All authors provided critical feedback and helped shape the research, analysis and manuscript.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION

We certify that the article is the Authors' and Co-Authors' original work. The article has not received prior publication and is not under consideration for publication elsewhere. This research/manuscript has not been submitted for publication nor has it been published in whole or in part elsewhere. We testify to the fact that all Authors have contributed significantly to the work, validity and legitimacy of the data and its interpretation for submission to Jurnal Intelek.

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